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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/SPG AND EAP/CM

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KPKO](#) [SU](#) [CH](#) [UN](#)  
SUBJECT: SUDAN/CHINA: UNSC VOTE ON DARFUR SHOWS LIMITS OF  
FRIENDSHIP

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i. Andrew Steinfeld; Reasons: 1.4(b)  
and (d).

¶1. (C) China decided to abstain from the April 25 vote on UNSC Resolution 1672, imposing a travel ban and financial sanctions on four Sudanese individuals for war crimes in Darfur, because going against a majority of the Council's members would have been "unthinkable," Chinese Defense Attache Li Jingping told PolOff on April 26. Li acknowledged that China had changed its tactics since April 17, when China, Russia, and Qatar blocked the automatic sanctions provisions of Resolution 1591, but reiterated that China's fundamental opposition to sanctions had not changed. "Once Russia and Qatar decided to abstain, Ambassador Wang (Guangya) decided it was better to abstain than veto," Li said.

¶2. (C) PolOff noted that China's decision was noteworthy, especially given recent press attention to China's close relationship with Sudan. Li, however, argued that China had already pressed Sudan to make peace in Darfur; Vice Foreign Minister Lu Guozeng had already visited Khartoum twice as a "special envoy," though Li admitted neither visit had been very successful. A third visit was possible, though there were currently no plans for one.

¶3. (C) Li noted that Chinese participation in a UN-led peacekeeping force for Darfur was also possible, though not without Sudan's approval. Even then, however, it would be very difficult logistically. PLA troops on duty with the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) in Southern Sudan had spent their first three months "just trying to survive," because there was no infrastructure, and they had to bring everything with them from China. "Things are even worse in Darfur," Li observed, recalling a visit last year to the region.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: Li's observations are not surprising, but they do underline the limits of China's friendship with Sudan. Beijing may be willing to join others in backing Khartoum, but appears reluctant to make a stand on its own.  
STEINFELD